

No-mint-mark dimes turn up in Pittsburgh

By Roger Boye

Still more 1982 no-mint-mark dimes have turned up in circulation, creating new excitement for what may be the country's most valuable error coin of the last decade.

People living in or near Pittsburgh made the latest finds, according to an Ohio dealer who has seen hundreds of the rarities. Pittsburgh is in the Cleveland Federal Reserve district, as is Sandusky, Ohio, site of most of the earlier discoveries.

All 1982-dated dimes are supposed to sport a mint mark above the date. Government workers apparently forgot to punch the mint letter into just one of hundreds of dies used to make dimes last year, creating the oddity.

The first batch of error coins was uncovered months ago by persons who had received change at an amusement park near Sandusky. Publicity about those finds prompted bank tellers in Sandusky to search through bags of 1982 dimes in the bank vaults.

Ohio dealer Clyde Englehardt of the Toledo Coin Exchange said he obtained many of the 1,700 specimens he now owns from those lucky tellers, some of whom "got rich" selling their treasures to dealers.

The dimes now turning up in Pittsburgh—about 900 so far—are inferior in quality to the Sandusky specimens. Normally, a dime die can make a half-million or more coins, but experts believe the no-mint mark die cracked early in its production life, forcing workers to remove it prematurely.

Englehardt's research indicates that people have found as many as 12,000 error dimes. He guesses that the total number actually produced may not be much more than 12,000. If he's right, few additional coins remain in circulation.

Predictably, the latest discoveries have depressed market values for the error piece. Englehardt sold "choice uncirculated" specimens for as much as \$375 each in August; two weeks ago he unloaded 20 dimes for \$250 per coin.

But he's bullish on the long-term potential for the oddity, comparing it with a 1955 double-die Lincoln cent. That error coin retails for \$3,750 in "choice uncirculated" condition, according to catalogues.

● About 25 dealers will sell their wares next Sunday at the third annual show of the Oak Forest Coin Club. Also, several hobbyists will display collectibles, and club members will raffle gold and silver coins. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Holiday Inn, 5000 W. 127th St., Alsip.

● Also next Sunday, the Kankakee Valley Coin and Stamp Club will conduct its annual fall show from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Cleman's Auction Gallery, 4½ miles west of Kankakee on Ill. Hwy. 17.